

# Front of Package Labelling - Why is it Important?

We are what we eat...no matter the time of year or type of food. It's important that we eat healthily throughout the year as food is one of the most important factors of our overall health. Knowing what to eat is important as it influences our physical and mental well-being and what we do and how well we do it. Did you know that food labels on pre-packaged foods help us to choose healthy from unhealthy foods? Here are some important facts to keep in mind:

## Facts About Foods We Eat

- “Processed food” includes food that has been cooked, canned, frozen, packaged or changed in nutritional composition from its natural form with fortifying, preserving or preparing in different ways.
- There are many processed pre-packaged foods and beverages being sold or made available in Jamaica, and especially in our schools, which have high levels of fat, sugars and salt.
- Foods high in salt, saturated fat and *trans* fat, and sugar can increase the risk of developing non-communicable diseases (NCDs), like obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and heart disease.
- Overweight and obesity are now dramatically on the rise in Jamaica!
- Did you know that one in two Jamaicans (54%) are overweight or obese? The rates for children are also growing fast.
- The World Health Organization recommends that we should reduce how much of these foods we eat daily to help prevent and reduce the rates of obesity and NCDs.

## Why are Front-of-package (FOP) Labels Important?

- Nutrition labelling (e.g. Nutrition Facts panels) on the back of food and beverage packages is not mandatory for products in Jamaica therefore many products don't have it.
- Nutrition Facts panels can be hard to understand. As consumers, we need an easier way to identify and make healthier food choices when shopping.
- Front-of-package warning labels are symbols and rating systems placed on the front of food packages to provide nutritional information.
- Front-of-package warnings can be simple, clearly visible labels to warn or inform us of what is unhealthy about some foods. This type of label can help us make the best choices for our bodies, reducing our risk of diseases such as high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and certain types of cancer.
- Front-of-Package Labels will also encourage our industries to provide us with healthier food choices, by improving the nutritional qualities of the products they offer.
- With this information, we are better able to control our purchases of foods high in fat, salt and sugar to help keep Jamaica healthy, and keep overweight/obesity on the low.



As many as 9 out of 10 Jamaicans support clear warning labels on the front of food and beverage packages to warn consumers when products are high in sugar, salt or fats. Wouldn't you want to know what's in your food too? Here are some ways you can help to make your food safer and healthier for you:

- **Read your nutrition labels if they are on the food package and look for unhealthy salt, sugar and fats**
- **Support our campaign. Share or repost our messages and contact us to learn more.**
- **Demand Front-of-package labelling to help us to know #WhatsinOurFood**



To learn more about Front-of-Package Labelling and our campaign, feel free to contact us at: